



 SCHOLASTIC

# KIDS & FAMILY READING REPORT

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7<sup>TH</sup> EDITION

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## THE RISE OF READ-ALOUD

YouGov®

The power of read-aloud is breaking through and we could not be more excited about it. Compelling research from both the education and medical fields has shown us its importance for parent-child bonding as well as language and literacy development. Families are also telling us it is a deeply profound opportunity to connect in essential ways with children, creating nurturing spaces for them and ways to talk and think together.

The latest *Kids & Family Reading Report*<sup>TM</sup> shows us that the percentage of parents reading aloud during a child's first three months is up nearly 50% since 2014. And the number of 6–8 year-olds being read aloud to 5–7 days a week is up seven points since 2016. Reason to celebrate! Yet, there is always more work to be done. While a majority of five-year-olds are read aloud to 5–7 days a week, this percentage decreases dramatically at age six and beyond. This outcome shows us we have to grow the message that reading to children is powerful at all ages. It never stops being important and having great impact upon the life of a child.

It's undeniable that it is hard to fit everything needed to raise a child into a single day, or even week. But I urge you, parents, grandparents, caregivers and educators, to look closely at this powerful data and to see the opportunities that will open up for the child in your life. Parents tell us they are incorporating read-aloud

moments into routines, using them at impromptu times throughout the day, reading aloud to foster quiet time or as a part of an already boisterous playtime. And while the study shows that it is still the mother who reads aloud most often to her children, let's make a new commitment—as dads, as men, as grandfathers, as siblings—to read more often to the children in our homes and in our care.

The beautiful thing about the read-aloud is how it can be tailored to the lifestyles and preferences of families and caregivers. Everyone can join together around the read-aloud to create a sense of well-being and mutual care. It is a prescription for lifelong success for the child and a dose of deep well-being for the family.



**PAM ALLYN**

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**SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT,  
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## MORE PARENTS ARE READING ALOUD TO THEIR YOUNG CHILDREN

The *Kids & Family Reading Report*™ first created a benchmark of data around family read-aloud habits in 2014. This was the same year the American Academy of Pediatrics released new guidelines encouraging parents to read to their children beginning at birth, saying it enhances parent-child bonding and prepares babies' brains for language and literacy skills.

Overall, 30% of parents with children ages five and under in the 2014 study reported reading aloud to their child before the age of three months, and 73% reported doing so before their child's first birthday. Since then, the percentage who say their child was read to before the age of three months is up nearly 50%, with 43% saying their child was read to essentially from birth. Plus, 77% of parents with children ages five and under say read-aloud time started before their child turned one (see Figure 1).

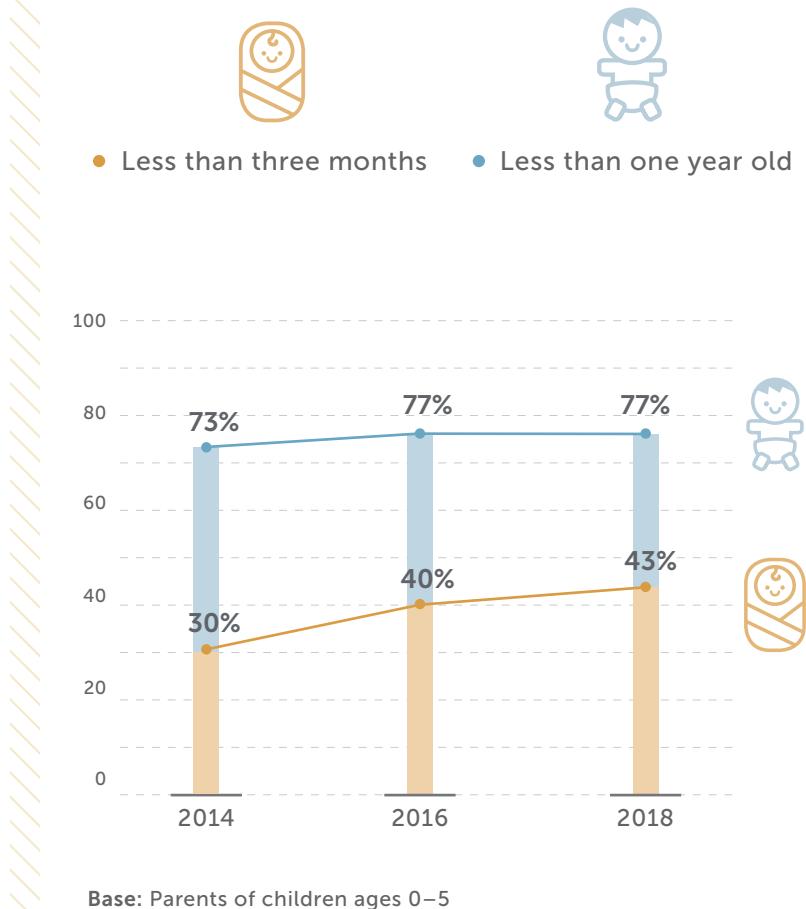


“  
MY MOM AND DAD SIT AND WE READ TOGETHER. WE SPEND TIME TOGETHER READING THE BOOKS AND LAUGHING AND TALKING.”

8-YEAR-OLD GIRL

### Age of child when reading books aloud at home started

Figure 1. Percentage of parents who say reading books aloud to child at home started when child was less than three months and less than one year old.



## THE FAMILY READ-ALOUD EXPERIENCE IS OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE

More than 80% of both kids and parents across all income levels and child's age love or like read-aloud time a lot. And among children ages 6–8 and their parents, love for read-aloud time is up eight and nine points, respectively, since 2016.

Why is read-aloud time loved so much? Parents and children say it is because it is a special time with each other (see *Figure 2*). And this feeling stays with children as they grow older, as a 17-year-old boy shared: *"It was quality one-on-one time with my parents and I have special memories of picking out the books that they would read with me."*

## READING ALOUD IS A PARTNERSHIP

Taking a closer look at families' habits during read-aloud time, this research reveals it is a highly interactive experience—it's a partnership. Children choose books, kids and parents ask questions of each other, turn pages and punctuate the experience with sound effects. This interactivity fuels the child-parent bond that children express when asked to describe why they love(d) read-aloud time: *"My mom and dad sit and we read together. We spend time together reading the books and laughing and talking,"* an 8-year-old girl explained (see *Figure 3*).

### Why is read-aloud time loved so much?

Figure 2. Parents' and children's views on read-aloud



Parents



Children

86%

of parents who read or have read aloud to their child **love(d) or like(d) it a lot** \*

92%

of parents say it is/ was **a special time with each other** \*

83%

of children who are or have been read aloud to **love(d) or like(d) it a lot** \*\*

85%

of children say it is/ was **a special time with each other** \*\*

\* Parents of children ages 0–14 who read or have read aloud to their child

\*\* Children ages 6–14 who are or have been read aloud to

It is interesting to note, though there is not a clear causal relationship, that kids ages 6–11 who actively participate in read-aloud time by asking questions or making funny noises/sound effects are more likely than other children to be frequent readers.

## INTERACTIVITY DURING READ-ALOUD STARTS YOUNG

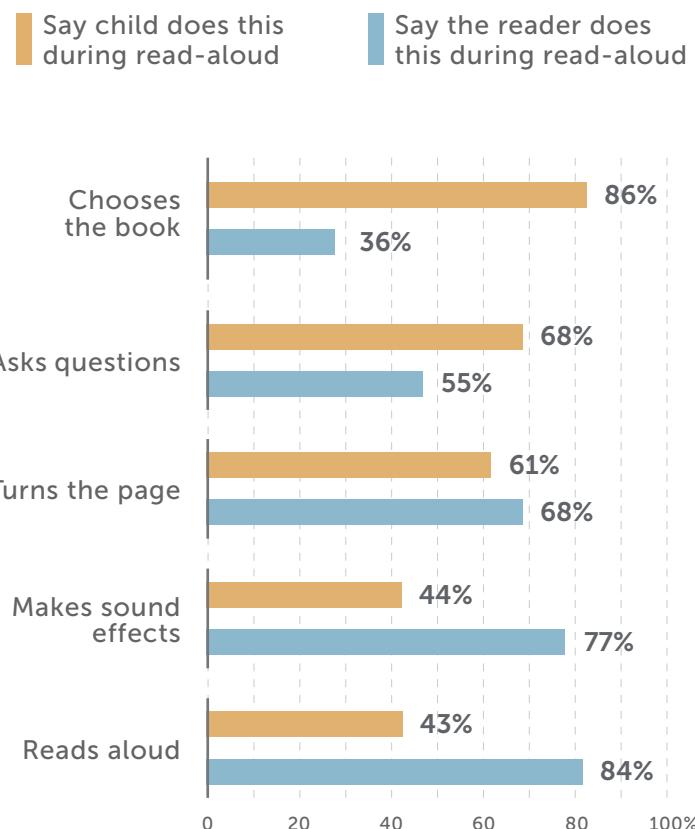
Eighty-five percent of children ask questions during read-aloud by the time they are eight, with 72% of parents asking questions when reading aloud to babies and toddlers ages two and under. About four in 10 children across age groups make sound effects and funny noises: about eight in 10 parents of kids ages 0–8 do this, and even six in 10 parents of 9–11 year-olds continue to do so. Additionally, book choice starts early with 66% of parents of 0–2 year-olds saying their child picks the books during read-aloud time, increasing to over 90% of children ages 3–11.

## READ-ALOUD FREQUENCY IS ON THE RISE

Overall, 55% of children ages 0–5 are read books aloud at home at least five days a week, with 37% read to daily. And some of these children (52%) are read to twice a day or more. The data also show an encouraging increase in the number of 6–8-year-olds being read aloud to compared to 2016 (from 38% to 45%).

### Roles played during read-aloud time

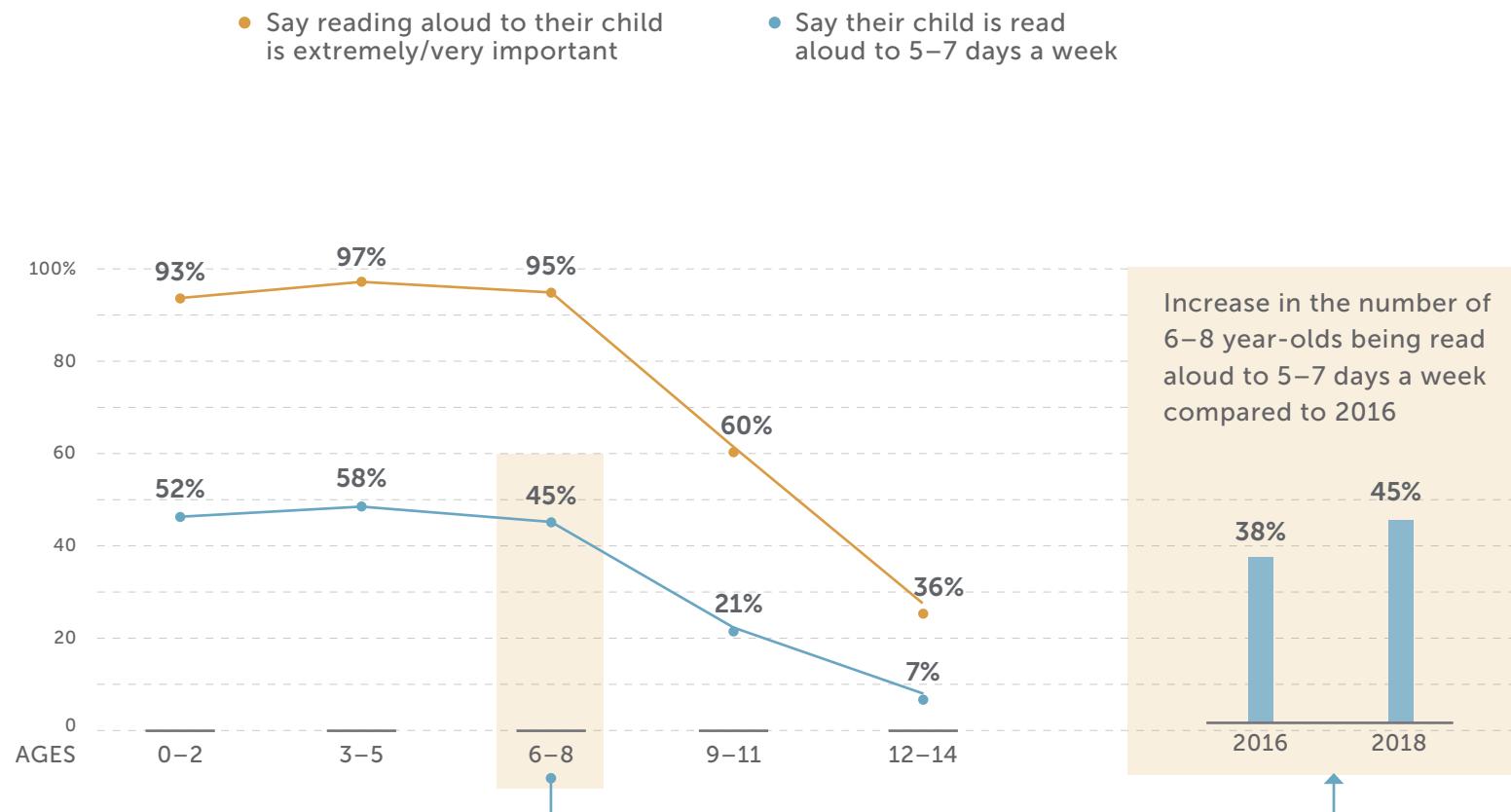
Figure 3. Percentage of parents who...



Base: Parents of children ages 0–11 who are currently read aloud to

## Reading aloud at home: importance and frequency

Figure 4. Percentage of parents who...



Base: Parents of children ages 0-14

## YET, READ-ALOUD FREQUENCY DIMINISHES RAPIDLY AS CHILDREN GROW OLDER

Read-aloud time is unquestionably a beloved and important family event. We also know from previous analysis through the *Kids & Family Reading Report* that both being read aloud to 5–7 days a week before kindergarten and continuing this habit are key factors in predicting whether or not children ages 6–11 will be frequent readers.

And yet, reading aloud peaks at age five. While a majority of families read aloud 5–7 days a week before a child enters kindergarten (55%), this percentage begins to decline dramatically with each additional year of age. This decrease is closely mirrored by parents' view on the importance of reading aloud as children grow older (see *Figure 4*). When asked why read-aloud decreases or stops, parents most commonly cite the fact that children can read on their own. For many kids, becoming an independent reader corresponds with the first major decline in read-aloud frequency among the 6–8 age group.

The data also display a disparity among lower- and higher-income households. Lower-income families with children ages eight and under read aloud less frequently: 39% among families with household incomes less than \$35,000 and 62% among families with incomes of \$100,000 or more. Lower-income families with kids ages five and under are also less likely, at 46% compared to about seven in 10, to have received information on the importance of reading aloud from birth when their children were babies.

## HOW TO MAKE READ ALOUD FIT IN, REGARDLESS OF AGE

Among parents of children ages 0–8 who are read aloud to, 94% include this activity as part of a routine and 91% say it is a spur-of-the-moment activity. Eighty-five percent do both. Routines predominantly include bed- and naptime but also playtime, bath time or meal time. Impromptu read-alouds center on using books to respond to a child's wants and needs, such as learning moments and quiet time (see *Figure 5*). Also, while more moms read to their 0–11 year-olds than dads (93% compared to 79%), two-thirds of parents (66%) say the read-aloud experience includes more than just the reader and the child, most commonly the child's other parent and/or siblings.

One 17-year-old girl noted, "it reaffirms the importance of reading and helped bring me closer to my parents," punctuating that reading aloud is a tool for family bonding, inspiration, and education.

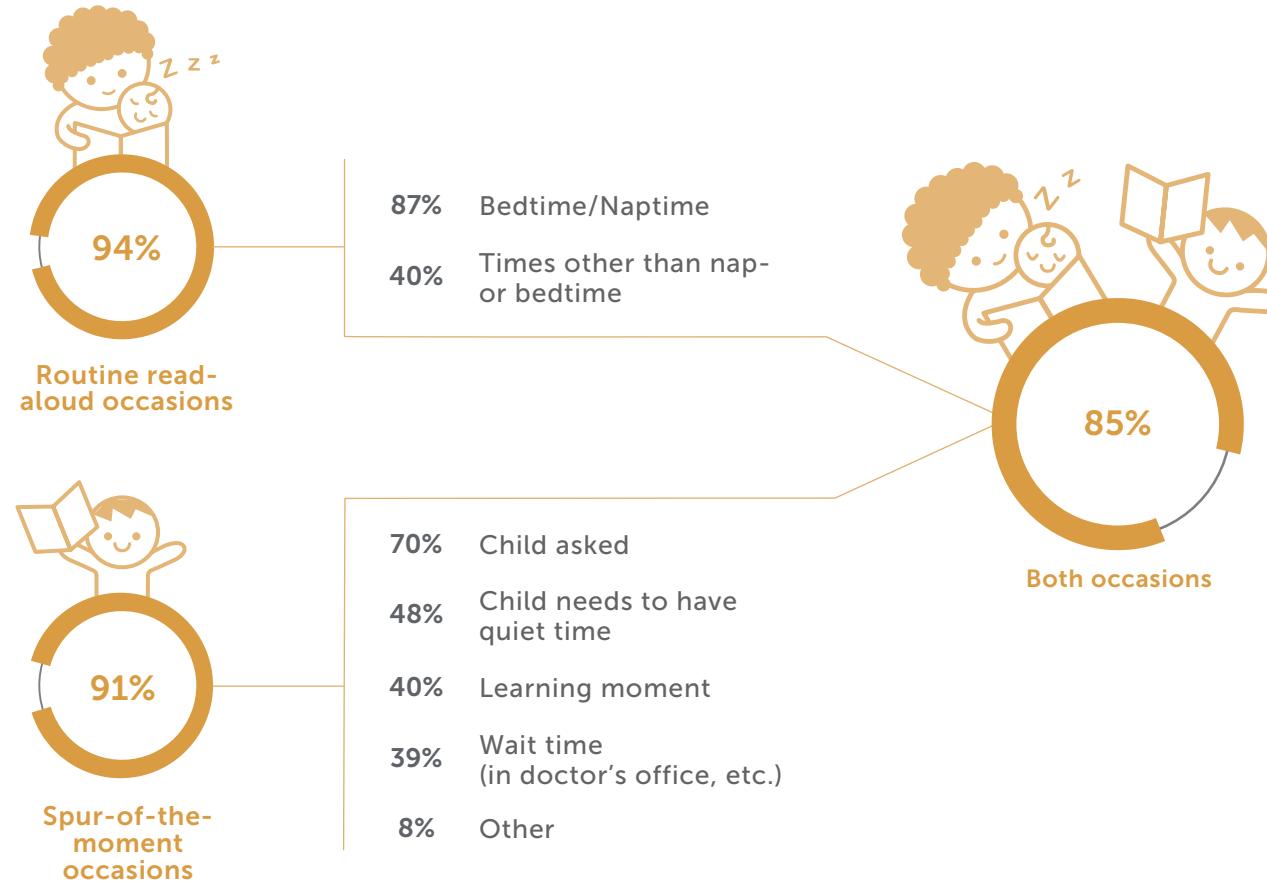
“

I HAVE SPECIAL MEMORIES OF PICKING OUT THE BOOKS THAT THEY WOULD READ WITH ME. IT WAS QUALITY ONE-ON-ONE TIME WITH MY PARENTS.”

17-YEAR-OLD BOY

## Read-Aloud Occasions

Figure 5. Parents' characterization of when and where read-aloud time takes place



Base: Parents of children ages 0–8 who are currently read aloud to

## APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

### STUDY METHODOLOGY

- The study was managed by YouGov and was fielded between September 6, 2018 and October 4, 2018. The total sample size of 2,758 parents and children includes:
  - 678 parents with children ages 0–5,
  - 1,040 parents with children ages 6–17, plus one child ages 6–17 from the same household.
- Parents of children ages 6–17 completed their survey questions first before passing the survey on to one randomly selected child in the target age range. The survey sample was sourced and recruited by GfK using their nationally representative KnowledgePanel®<sup>1</sup>.
- To further ensure proper demographic representation within the sample, final data were weighted according to the following benchmark distributions of children ages 0–17 from the most recent (March 2018) Current Population Survey (CPS) from the U.S. Census Bureau:

- Child gender within each of six age groups (0–2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–11, 12–14, 15–17), region, household income, and child race/ethnicity.

### ADDITIONAL STUDY METHODOLOGY

- Some survey language was modified in age-appropriate ways to ensure comprehension among children ages 6–8.
- Children ages 6–8 were not asked some survey questions that involved more sophisticated thinking than is reasonable to ask 6–8 year-olds.
- Parents were invited to help young children read the survey but they were asked to allow children to independently answer all questions. At the end of the survey, children were asked to record the degree to which a parent helped them with the survey. Consistent with prior research, an analysis

comparing the responses of children with and without parental involvement showed no significant differences.

- Virtually all (99%) of the adults interviewed were the parent or stepparent of the child surveyed. Therefore, throughout this report, we refer to adult respondents as "parents."
- Ethnicity and Race data were collected using the United States Census Bureau approach; where race and ethnicity are two distinct concepts. An individual can select one or more of the following: White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, or some other race.

- According to the Census Bureau, ethnicity determines whether a person is of Hispanic origin or not. For this reason, ethnicity is broken out in two categories, Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. Hispanics may report as any race.
- For the purposes of subgroup analysis, four groups are compared to each other: Hispanics (of any race); Non-Hispanic Whites; Non-Hispanic Blacks; and Non-Hispanic Multiple race, Asian, or Other races. These labels are shortened throughout the report to: Hispanic; White; Black; Multiple, Asian or Other.
- Data may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

<sup>1</sup> The survey was conducted using the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®, a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The recruitment process employs an address-based sampling methodology from the latest Delivery Sequence File of the USPS—a database with full coverage of all delivery points in the U.S. As such, samples from KnowledgePanel cover all households regardless of their Internet or telephone status, providing fully representative online samples to the research community. For those who agree to participate, but do not already have Internet access, GfK provides at no cost a laptop and ISP connection. People who already have computers and internet service are permitted to participate using their own equipment. Panelists then receive unique log-in information for accessing surveys online, and then are sent emails throughout each month inviting them to participate in research.

<sup>2</sup> ([www.census.gov/mso/www/training/pdf/race-ethnicity-onepager.pdf](http://www.census.gov/mso/www/training/pdf/race-ethnicity-onepager.pdf))

## APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SAMPLE

### AGE OF CHILD RESPONDENTS

6–8	24%
9–11	25%
12–14	25%
15–17	26%

### GENDER OF CHILD RESPONDENTS

Total Boys	51%
Total Girls	49%
Total Prefer to Describe as (Specify)	0%

### RACE/ETHNICITY OF CHILD RESPONDENTS

Non-Hispanic White	51%
Hispanic	25%
Non-Hispanic Black	13%
Non-Hispanic, Other	6%
Non-Hispanic, Multiple Races	4%

### AGE OF CHILD THAT PARENTS OF CHILDREN 0–5 ANSWERED ABOUT

0–2	49%
3–5	51%

### GENDER OF CHILD THAT PARENTS OF CHILDREN 0–5 ANSWERED ABOUT

Total Boys	51%
Total Girls	49%
Total Prefer to Describe as (Specify)	0%

### RACE/ETHNICITY OF CHILD THAT PARENTS OF CHILDREN 0–5 ANSWERED ABOUT

Non-Hispanic White	50%
Hispanic	26%
Non-Hispanic Black	14%
Non-Hispanic, Other	6%
Non-Hispanic, Multiple Races	5%

### MARITAL STATUS OF PARENT RESPONDENTS

MARITAL STATUS OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Married/Living with partner (NET)	87%	84%
Married	79%	79%
Living with partner	9%	5%
Widowed/Divorced/Separated	7%	9%
Never married	6%	7%

AGE OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Under age 35	<b>53%</b>	<b>19%</b>
Age 35–44	<b>40%</b>	<b>48%</b>
Age 45–54	<b>5%</b>	<b>29%</b>
Age 55+	<b>2%</b>	<b>5%</b>
Mean	<b>34.8 years</b>	<b>41.5 years</b>

GENDER OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Male	<b>45%</b>	<b>47%</b>
Female	<b>55%</b>	<b>53%</b>
Prefer to self-describe	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>

RELATIONSHIP OF ADULT RESPONDENTS TO CHILD	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Parent (NET)	<b>99%</b>	<b>99%</b>
Parent	<b>97%</b>	<b>94%</b>
Stepparent	<b>1%</b>	<b>4%</b>
Other legal guardian (NET)	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>
Grandparent	<b>1%</b>	<b>0%</b>
Other legal guardian	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION EARNED BY PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
High school graduate or less (NET)	<b>22%</b>	<b>34%</b>
Less than high school	<b>3%</b>	<b>7%</b>
High school	<b>19%</b>	<b>26%</b>
Some college or more (NET)	<b>78%</b>	<b>66%</b>
Some college	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>
Bachelor's degree +	<b>52%</b>	<b>41%</b>
HOUSEHOLD INCOME	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Less than \$35K	<b>23%</b>	<b>23%</b>
\$35K–\$60K	<b>20%</b>	<b>17%</b>
\$60K–\$100K	<b>27%</b>	<b>24%</b>
\$100K+	<b>30%</b>	<b>37%</b>
Mean	<b>\$81K</b>	<b>\$91K</b>
Median	<b>\$80K</b>	<b>\$80K</b>
RACE/ETHNICITY OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Non-Hispanic White	<b>59%</b>	<b>57%</b>
Hispanic	<b>17%</b>	<b>21%</b>
Non-Hispanic Black	<b>13%</b>	<b>14%</b>
Non-Hispanic, Other	<b>8%</b>	<b>6%</b>
Non-Hispanic, Multiple Races	<b>4%</b>	<b>2%</b>

## APPENDIX C: SUBGROUP SAMPLE SIZES

AGE OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Total	<b>1,040</b>
6–8	<b>275</b>
9–11	<b>241</b>
12–14	<b>262</b>
15–17	<b>262</b>
GENDER OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Boys ages 6–17	<b>509</b>
Girls ages 6–17	<b>529</b>
AGE OF CHILD RESPONDENTS WITHIN GENDER	
Boys ages 6–8	<b>130</b>
Girls ages 6–8	<b>145</b>
Boys ages 9–11	<b>117</b>
Girls ages 9–11	<b>124</b>
Boys ages 12–14	<b>133</b>
Girls ages 12–14	<b>127</b>
Boys ages 15–17	<b>129</b>
Girls ages 15–17	<b>133</b>
AGE OF CHILD THAT PARENTS ANSWERED ABOUT	
Parents of children ages 0–17	<b>1,718</b>
Parents of children ages 0–5	<b>678</b>
Parents of children ages 0–2	<b>313</b>
Parents of children ages 3–5	<b>365</b>
Parents of children ages 6–17	<b>1,040</b>

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	KIDS/PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	KIDS/PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Less than \$35K	<b>109</b>	<b>206</b>
\$35K–\$60K	<b>118</b>	<b>161</b>
\$60K–\$100K	<b>203</b>	<b>261</b>
\$100K+	<b>248</b>	<b>412</b>

READING FREQUENCY OF CHILD AGES 6–17
Frequent readers (read books for fun 5–7 days a week)
Moderately frequent readers (read books for fun 1–4 days a week)
Infrequent readers (read books for fun less than 1 day a week)

RACE/ETHNICITY OF CHILD RESPONDENTS
Non-Hispanic White
Hispanic
Non-Hispanic Black
Non-Hispanic, Other, Multiple Races

***The Rise of Read-Aloud*** is one installment of the Scholastic *Kids & Family Reading Report<sup>TM</sup>: 7th Edition*. The additional installments of the report explore attitudes and behaviors around reading books for fun, the latest trends in children's reading habits, what both kids and parents want in books, as well as the importance of book access and summer reading.

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